

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
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R 251439Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4003
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION USBERLIN UNN
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 5160

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, GE
SUBJECT: BIERMANN PETITION SIGNER ASSESSES GDR INTELLECTUALS AND
CHARTER 77.

1. DURING CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF JAN.21 , GDR WRITER
GUNTER KUNERT, ONE OF THE ORIGINAL BIERMANN PETITION
SIGNERS, COMPARED THE POSITION OF GDR INTELLECTUALS WHO
SUPPORTED BIERMANN WITH THEIR POLISH COUNTERPARTS AND THE
CHARTER 77 GROUP IN PRAGUE. KUNERT JOINED JUREK BECKER,
GERHARD WOLF AND KARL HEINZ JACOBS IN BEING OUSTED
FROM THE SED ON JAN. 20 FOR HIS PART IN THE BIERMANN AFFAIR.

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2. KUNERT SAID THAT HE AND FELLOW GDR WRITERS HAD KEPT
ABREAST OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. HOWEVER,
THEY DID NOT CONSIDER THEMSELVES AN "OPPOSITION" IN
THESENSE OF THE CHARTER 77 GROUP OR INTELLECTUALS IN
POLAND. THEBIERMANN PETITION SIGNERS HAD ISSUED WHAT
KUNERT CONSIDERED TO BE AN EXCEEDINGLY MILD PROTEST
TO THE SED ON A SPECIFIC ACTIN; THE EXPATRIATIN OF

WOLF BIERMANN. KUNERT STRESSED THAT THOSE WHO SIGNED THE PETITION WERE WITHOUT EXCEPTION SED SUPPORTERS AND SAID THAT MOST OF THEM HAD DISAGREED WITH BIERMANN ON MANY POINTS.

3. KUNERT SAID HE HAD THUS BEEN SHOCKED AT THE SED'S STRONG REACTION TO THIS MILD PROTEST. EXPELLED FROM THE SED AFTER HAVING BEEN IN THE PARTY SINCE 1949, KUNERT WONDERED HOW HE WOULD BE ABLE TO GO ON WRITING IN THE CURRENT HOSTILE ATMOSPHERE IN THE GDR, EVEN THOUGH GDR CULTURAL FUNCTIONARIES CONTINUED TO PROCLAIM A CONTINUATION OF PRE-BIERMANN CULTURAL POLICIES. HOWEVER, KUNERT SAID HIS PERSONAL DISORIENTATION AND DISAPPOINTMENT HAD NOT DRIVEN HIM INTO OPPOSITION OR CAUSED HIM TO CONSIDER LEAVING THE GDR. IT WOULD TAKE TIME FOR THE SITUATION TO SETTLE. AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED, THE BIERMANN PETITION HAD BEEN A ONE-SHOT AFFAIR, AND GDR INTELLECTUALS WERE STILL DIGESTING WHAT THEY CONSIDERED AN OVERLY-HARSH SED REACTION TO THEIR PROTEST.

4. KUNERT FELT THAT THE GDR INTERNAL SITUATION WAS BASICALLY STABLE. GDR CITIZENS KNEW THEY WERE BETTER OFF THAN OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE SOVIET BLOC AND WERE ALSO AWARE OF INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE FRG. KUNERT FELT THAT SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT THE SITUATION IN POLAND MIGHT BE A CAUSE FOR WHAT HE CONSIDERED TO BE SED OVERREACTION IN THE BIERMANN CASE AND IN COMBINATION THE RECENT RISE IN APPLICATIONS FOR EMIGRATION.

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5. COMMENT: KUNERT'S REMARKS PARALLEL THOSE OF TWO OTHER PETITION SIGNERS, JUREK BECKER AND GUNTHER DE BRUYN, TO WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN RECENTLY. THESE GDR INTELLECTUALS APPEAR NOT TO CONSIDER THEMSELVES AN "OPPOSITION". WHILE KEEPING UP ON EVENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND POLAND, THEY DO NOT SEEM INCLINED TO ORGANIZE IN OPPOSITION TO SED POLICIES OR ISSUE STATEMENTS SIMILAR TO CHARTER 77.

6. WHILE KUNERT AND SEVERAL OTHER PETITION SIGNERS HAVE BEEN EXPELLED FROM THE SED, THEY REMAIN IN THE GDR WRITERS ASSOCIATION, WHICH MEANS THEY CAN STILL PUBLISH IN THE GDR.

POLANSKY

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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